

Kohtri valley not far from Lansdowne, my wife and I saw a very conspicuous white object standing some 35 yards away and about the same number of feet below us. For a moment we thought we must be getting near a forest camp (we did not know the country), and that we were looking at the rear view of a white hill pony with phenomenally shortly docked tail; then that it was only a barkless bleached stump of that shape. But after the first moment, there was no question but that it was a sambhar hind standing with its back to us, with head turned to watch us through some thin scrub. We watched it with and without binoculars at the short range mentioned for as long as we wished, for, despite our movements, it did not stir. The muzzle was conspicuously pink and completely pigmentless as also were the fleshy parts round the eyes; the eyes also appeared pink, but we could not be absolutely certain of this; the ears with the light showing through them appeared possibly very slightly pigmented. Over the whole body the hair was definitely white, perhaps a bit dingy as though in need of grooming, as sambhar mostly look to be at this season, but impossible to describe as merely 'pale buff' or 'pale fawn'. It seems surprising that so conspicuous an animal could survive to maturity in forests with plenty of tiger and leopard, not to mention poachers.

NAINI TAL, U.P.
April 1, 1938.

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V.—THE MATING OF ELEPHANTS.

The manner in which elephants mate has long been a moot point. Owing perhaps to the position of the generative opening in the Cow it has been suggested that during congress she lies on her back—some have held that she digs a hole. The question if there yet remains any doubt as to the manner of fecundation may definitely be set at rest by the authentic photograph which I enclose.

The female was purchased on the 13th February 1936 being wild and just caught in a Khedda. Her age is about 30 years and height 7 ft. 6 in. The tusker is aged 35-36 having been in captivity for about 30 years, his height is 8 ft. 5 in. At the time the snap was taken the female had been partly broken in—she could carry a pad but did not know all the words of command. The pair had been brought in from the hills where they are let loose fettered and lead a semi-natural life often mixing with wild herds. The snap was taken from a distance of 60 yards in an open field with scores of villagers looking on. The tusker mounted about eight times, but the female did not respond as she kept crossing her hind legs. Subsequent to this the tusker mounted on several occasions, either in the compound or in the hills. The female is now in calf. The tusker has been getting musth for the last 5 years, the attack generally lasting from 10 days to a fortnight when he is unapproachable. The attack comes on usually

in April or May. When in musth he always seeks the company of a female, and mounts whether she is willing or not. A point to be emphasised is that he was not musth when the photograph was taken.

COMILLA, TIPPERA,

E. BENGAL.

April 11, 1938.

PAUL DE LAUNEY.

[We have not published the photograph submitted by the writer. There are a number of photos in existence which prove that elephants copulate in the position usual to quadrupeds. In the female elephant, the peculiar position of the female external generative opening, which hangs down in much the same position as the penis in the male, led to widespread doubts as to whether the act of copulation was performed in the position normal among quadrupeds. On plaques and in ancient Indian sculpture in which elephants are sometimes represented *in coitu*, the female is shown literally standing on her head. The weight and vigor of the male may force the female to go down on her fore knees and rest her forehead on the ground. Under sexual excitement the generative opening in the female is raised from its pendant position and assumes a situation more or less normal in quadrupeds. The alteration in position has been observed by ancient anatomists. Aristotle refers to it in his *Historia Animalium*. An interesting note in the *Oriental Sporting Magazine* indicates that the animals may at times take advantage of irregularities in the confirmation of the ground and so ease the burden of weight. In the note under reference the writer saw a pair of elephants mating. The female was standing in a dry nullah which was not more than five feet wide. The male rested his forefeet on either bank and so relieved the cow of the weight of his body.—Eds.]

VI.—A LARGE INDIAN ELEPHANT.

A Game Ranger on crop protection patrol shot a large tuskless male elephant last December in the Bhamo District of Upper Burma. The elephant which was a notorious man-killer, contained 8 ball shot from 12-bore guns, along one side (it was impossible to turn the elephant over to find out what was in the other side) and measured between pegs placed at the shoulder and the fore-feet, 10 ft. 8 in. It is probable that the effect of lying on its side, slightly increased the height measurement as recorded between the pegs but it would be interesting to learn whether larger Indian elephants than this are on record.

MAYMYO, BURMA.

February 11, 1938.

F. J. MUSTILL,

Game Warden.

[The highest recorded measurement of an Indian elephant is that of an animal from Ceylon which taped 10 ft. 8 in. at the shoulder (E. L. Walker, *Rowland Wards Records of Big Game*,